Expression of the Market–oriented Positions in the Wellness Services Enterprises

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Abstract

Wellness services industry has been growing for a number of years in the global world. However, the development of wellness services and wellness spa tourism services is rather spontaneous in the countries which have no deep traditions or long practice in health care and wellness supply. The Lithuanian wellness services industry has been already growing very rapidly for several years. The growing supply of the wellness services influences competition in the market, more rapid response to competitor's actions and the changing needs and expectations of the customers. That is why companies need to have a market – oriented position. The market – oriented position would make presumptions for successful positioning of the companies.

The current paper presents the dimensions of services enterprises' market orientation. These dimensions explain the market–oriented position of the company. The expression of the market–oriented position is revealed in the Lithuanian wellness services sector, acting under market conditions. Only commercial wellness services enterprises in Kaunas district have been chosen as an object for investigation. Theoretical and empirical research is beneficial for the wellness sector companies when strengthening not only the competitive advantage but also the position in the market.

***Keywords*: market–oriented positioning, customer–oriented positioning, inter–functional–oriented positioning, competitors–oriented positioning, wellness services.**

Introduction

The wellness services sector is characterized as a complex one, influenced by different purpose of services, supply specifics, and value offerings for the customer. This sector throughout the world has been recently is influenced by inner changes (Jayawardena et al., 2013; Liyanage and Jayawardena, 2013) (such as restructuring of sanatoriums, state hospitals, establishment of private health care centres, development of new wellness centres and sport clubs, etc.) and outer changes (reforms, medical insurance, economical changes, demographical customers profiles changes, technological process innovations, etc.). Different actors play in these service sectors: cities and regional hospitals, private clinics, public and private wellness centres and subsidiaries, medical insurance companies, and other. Each participant of the wellness industry has a different vision of his/her activity, perspectives, and resources. Growing expectations of the wellness services customer (Voigt et al., 2011) and growing competition force the participants of this industry to rethink the ways of acting in the wellness services market. In the economic – social activity, market actors should participate proactively, supplying the most attractive offerings, shaping customer experience to meet the supply, processing cooperation initiatives, adopting technologies, and creating innovation platforms.

In recent research, the demand for new innovative products has been pointed out, together with the benefit of the use of technological instruments, integrating the solutions of a service supply system with innovative marketing products, changes in customers' profile which influence the behaviour of consumers (Monteson and Singer, 2004; McNeil and Ragins, 2005). Changes in consumer behaviour and the demand for more individualized services suppose the urgency of customers co-creation in supplying the wellness services (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012). The wellness services enterprises should satisfy a growing interest for the customized services and supply of market–oriented services.

Orientation to the market in scientific research includes not only customer needs monitoring, the prognosis of their expectations, and the possibility to satisfy those, but also the impact of institutional regulation mechanisms, regional cooperation, competitors and technologies, the share and assimilation of knowledge about the market at the level of subsidiaries through formal and informal channels (Wood et al., 2000; Kaynak and Kara, 2004). The priority of an organization becomes an urgent position in the market. That is why expectations should be fulfilled in order to guarantee a specific position in the market (Vilkaite and Daukseviciute, 2011). The choice of such a position is implemented by the following dimensions: market–orientation which includes customer–orientation, competitors–orientation, and inter–coordination–orientation. These dimensions have been surveyed by Narver and Slater (1990), Chang and Chen (1998), Leisen et al. (2002). The findings of these surveys have shown that coordination among all these dimensions trying to acquire and (or) maintain a strong position is urgent enough. However, there is no relevant research on the wellness services sector, predicting market–oriented positions requirements and the actions of participants to be processed.

On the basis of scientific investigation of wellness services, it should be stated that service quality dimensions and productivity aspects were analysed in previous research. The value of wellness services is seen by a customer as perceived tangible quality, service quality, and enjoyment (Wang, 2012). Personnel wellness services, healthy diet, relaxation, health promotion treatments, experience of unique tourism resources, social activities, and mental learning are crucial factors for a customer (Chen et al., 2013). It is not enough to involve tourism resources in the supply of wellness services anymore (Liyanage and Jayawardena, 2013). The issue of such services is grounded in their importance for their customers and the capability to satisfy their needs (Satya et al., 2013). Recent research shows that not only relaxation, leisure, and pleasure are urgent for wellness, but also treatment, usually understood as the value of medical wellness services. However, it should be stressed that mandatory health care services, which could also be included into the package of wellness services or supplied by some of wellness suppliers, are subsided by the budget institutions and are strictly regulated ones. Thus, the supply of commercial health care services for a consumer filled the market niche and together with the wellness services could be defined as new services for the Lithuanian customer.

The research performed in the Lithuanian wellness services sector includes surveys of presumptions of the wellness spa development, the analysis of spa services customers' expectations and behaviour changes, research on offering innovations for ensuring the competitive advantage of health care and wellness services providers in Lithuania (Langviniene and Sekliuckiene, 2009, 2012). The rest of Lithuanian wellness services business research is rather scarce. Notably, Stasys and Pucinkiene (2009) investigated e–services, Hopeniene and Bagdoniene (2010) – presumptions for the establishment of a Lithuanian wellness cluster.

The analysis of scientific investigations has revealed that surveys on wellness services are fragmentary. These services are not analysed through a strategic prism. No dimensions of market–oriented positions for these services have ever been developed. The subject area of market–oriented wellness services' expression is urgent not only because of the research object; it may also reveal the expression of the market–oriented services dimensions positioning these services in the market. The research problem can be posed as the following question: what is the expression of a marked–oriented position in wellness services enterprises in Lithuania?

The aim of the paper is to disclose the specifics of retrieving market–oriented positions analysing three dimensions of the position: 1) customer–oriented, 2) competitors–oriented, and 3) inter-coordination–oriented in wellness services enterprises in Kaunas district.

Methods of the research are: scientific literature analysis and a pilot survey. Comparative and systematic analysis of scientific literature and quantitative research, based on Lithuanian wellness services enterprises' survey, were applied. Correlations have been measured analysing the obtained empirical data.

The logic of the paper refers to the following sequence. The first part grounds the dimensions of market–oriented position's dimensions. The second part of the paper provides and validates research methodology. The third part presents empirical research results. Then discussion and conclusion follow. Finally, directions for strengthening wellness services positions are identified.

Market–oriented position and its dimensions

Growing competition in the market forces enterprises to go in–depth into the possibilities of distinguishing their business from other competitors in the market. The demand to observe the market and to act proactively to the change, to prepare appropriate strategies enabling to survive in the market has been increasing. The main *external* environmental factors are as follows: political, legal, cultural, social, technological, and economic. The main *internal* environmental factors are related to tangible and intangible resources of the enterprises, such as the competence of their employees, enterprise financial capacity, management processes, enterprise size, etc. Enterprises react to changes in their environment, they also attempt to organize their activity as to adjust themselves to changes in the market. The evidence of enterprise activity is the position, oriented towards anyone acting in the market. The number of organizations which develop a market–oriented strategic position has been growing. The results of their activity are positive, as *generative learning* principals are applied. These principals are based on learning through the implementation of innovations as a key factor in achieving better results of their activity. Market–oriented enterprises not only adjust themselves to the changes in the external environment, but are able to change the present, to shape new market's demand (Slater and Narver, 1998). Market–oriented enterprises acquire competitive advantage supplying a wide segment of participants, satisfying their needs, and finding their own business niche. As Kotler and Keller (2007) emphasize, no competitors could be forgotten. They should be observed, too, and the needs and demands of their customer should be satisfied better than the needs of competitors' customers. In response to competitors' reaction, the structure of the market is likely to be transformed. That makes the enterprise to alternate its actions or even the competition strategy generally (Porter, 1980). The largest value, created by market–orientation, is disclosed by innovations implemented by enterprises. Consequently, it is possible to emphasize that the market–oriented position reflects specific skills which help perceive and satisfy customer needs and expectations in the most appropriate way (Kurtinaitiene and Gaizutis, 2008). According to Han, Kim and Srivastava (1998), the results of enterprises' activity are related to market orientations and innovations. The expectations of market–oriented enterprises are to acquire new technologies trying to use those in the fight against competitors which use older technologies.

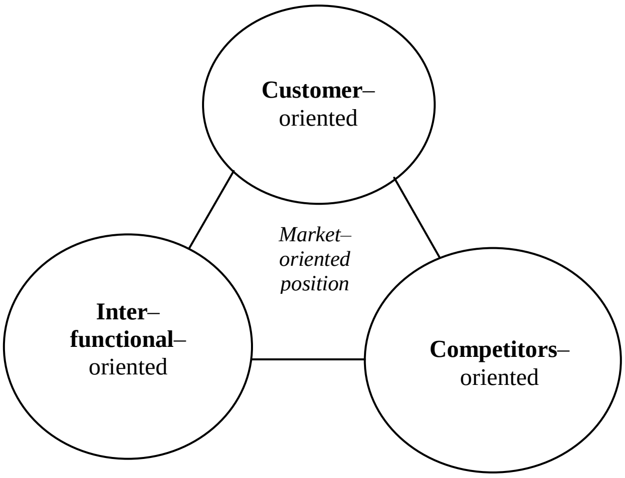

Figure 1. Framework for dimensions of market–oriented position

Market–oriented enterprises have to perceive both expressed and implicit needs of their consumers as well as their competitors' possibilities and plans in order to select and estimate market information in the systematic way. Enterprises create the highest value for their customers continually, empowering their inner resources, sharing the knowledge in their organization, acting in a coordinated and purposeful way.

Investigating the decomposition of market–orientation it should be stressed that a variety of different opinions on this research question still exist. The viewpoint of the researchers is represented by the surveys done by Narver and Slater (1990), Celuch et al. (2002), Leisen et al. (2002), Nwokah (2008), Chen et al. (2013). The authors, mentioned above, develop such main dimensions of the market–orientation: *customer orientation*, *competitor orientation*, and *inter–functional coordination*. Narver and Slater (1990) emphasize *long–term focus* and *profitability* as the most important results of the market–oriented position. A long–term investment perspective reflects market–orientation. That is the ground for the urgency of the long–term partnership with the consumer, too. Profitability is handled as the subsequence of the market–orientation and one of the goals of the enterprise (Narver and Slater, 1990). Leisen et al. (2002), group the three dimensions, presented above, into two: 1) *external market orientation dimensions,* including customer focus and competitor focus, and 2) *internal market orientation dimension*, including *inter–functional coordination.*

Market–orientation should strive for the implementation of three of the components, first of all: a) competitor–oriented, b) customers–oriented, and c) inter–functional–oriented (see Figure 1).

An organization should continuously search for the ways to remain competitive in creating value for the customer. Thus, an appropriate strategy and investment support are necessary. ***Customer–orientation*** is related to the selection and sharing of information, as well as to actions and countermove, done on the grounds of available information (Sørensen, 2012). Customer–orientation interrelates to management philosophy, as the main idea is that the consumer is a co-creator of the services supplied. That is why the empathy of each customer's needs is urgent. The conception of customer–orientation is not identical to market orientation. The reason is that interrelations with the concerned persons recently are not suitably close. Companies are trying to be customer oriented by providing individual solutions. Results show that culture oriented to customer's needs expands the innovation capacity of organizations (Akman and Yilmaz, 2008).

Competitors–orientation means that a seller perceives short–run weaknesses and strengths of his/her own enterprise as well as those of the main existing and potential competitors, their long–run capacities and strategies (Narver and Slater, 1990). The enterprises which are market–oriented are more open for the changing trends in the market as their actions are more likely to address competitors; they pay more attention to marketing. This stimulates enterprises to use more resources for the competitive activity, which could limit investment into the most modern technology implementation in the enterprise activity. The culture of a competitors–oriented organization helps create innovations as such organizations compare their possibilities with the possibilities of their competitors and then empower their employees to create, to develop capacities of the enterprise (Akman and Yilmaz, 2008). Alhakini and Baharun (2009) emphasize the importance of competitors and point out that to evaluate a potential risk and threats is very urgent in the fight with them. The main attention should be paid to satisfying customers' needs and to the prognosis of the strength positions of the competitors.

Inter–functional coordination is based on the acquired information about the customer and competitors. This information has coordinated benefit for the organization, engaging all function spheres employees and using enterprise's inner resources which help create the value added for the purchasers into a response to their needs. Inter–functional coordination could be described as harmony between all inner functions of the enterprise and processes (Kanovska and Tomaskova, 2012). Inter–functional coordination enables to communicate and share information about consumers, competitors, environment threats, and opportunities among functional subsidiaries of the organization. A successful implementation of the novelties is impossible without inter–functional coordination. Consequently, the mechanisms of inter–functional coordination and an attempt to integrate the work of all the departments of the organization are urgent. This mechanism has a positive effect strengthening the innovative capacity and concentrating each of organization's functional employees stimulating to behave so that appropriate conditions for innovations could be created (Akman and Yilmaz, 2008). Analysing inter–functional coordination in the services sector, attention should be paid not to the subsidiaries, but to employees, its nonmaterial resources, and to the balance of the internal orientation to the external one. Internal integration is performed through the activity which is effective and satisfies an employee – trainings, internal relations, motivation, benefit and management.

Having performed decomposition of the framework presented in Figure 1, it is possible to think that each of the dimensions will strengthen the market–oriented position of the wellness services enterprises in the market. Enterprises need to achieve synergy as they expect the best performance.

Research methodology

The research pursues revealing the expression of the dimensions of the market–oriented position in Lithuanian wellness services market. A pilot quantitative research was grounded on the relevant literature analysis (Narver and Slater (1990), Celuch et al. (2002), Leisen et al. (2002), and Nwokah (2008). The following investigating blocks has been formed:

- orientation towards the customer as the expression of the market–oriented position predominating in enterprises;
- the expression of the competitors–oriented position;
- the expression of the inter–functional–oriented position.

Primary data collection has been made with 35 respondents. According to statistical data (data of 2013), 543 wellness services enterprises operate in the district of Kaunas (Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 2013). Attempts were made to survey the entire general sample. However, a part of enterprise contacts could not be found. Thus 252 written questionnaires were sent out. The return rate was 35 filled in questionnaires.

For the selection of enterprises, the following criteria were used: 1) enterprises should perform their activity in the category Q. On the grounds of a classifier of the service sectors in Lithuania (EVRK 2 red.), wellness services are attributed to section Q – personal medical care and social work. 2) geographic position of their activity, the surveyed enterprises are established in the district of Kaunas. The respondents who filled in the questionnaire were managers of wellness enterprises, working in the company for more than 1 year in a position in administration personnel.

The limitation of the research is that not all Lithuanian enterprises, acting in the wellness services sector, were surveyed. Only the district of Kaunas was chosen for the survey. The findings of the research could not be generalized for the absolute majority of Lithuanian services enterprises, just for the study research.

In order to generate the desired empirical data, the survey was constructed. Referring to the distinguished dimensions (customer–orientation, competitors–orientation, and inter–functional–integration) and the criteria elaborating them, the questionnaire was formulated. The criteria were measured using a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 'highly disagree' (1 point) to 'highly agree' (5 points). The method of causal – comparative analysis was used for the analysis of the research results. The data were processed by means of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) program. In order to disclose research results, the estimation points and ordinal variables were applied, the correlation analysis was performed. The strength of the relationship between ordinal variables was studied by using Spearman's correlation coefficient. The quantitative survey was done by the students, studying in the program of Business administration on the supervision of the one of the author of the paper. For the statistical hypothesis verification, significance level of 0.05 was chosen.

Research results

Referring to the presented methodology of the research design, the results of the empirical research are further elaborated.

Effects of the environment for the position of the enterprise. One of the tasks of the survey was to disclose how the activity of the enterprises is influenced by the external and inner environmental factors which have an impact on the position of the enterprise.

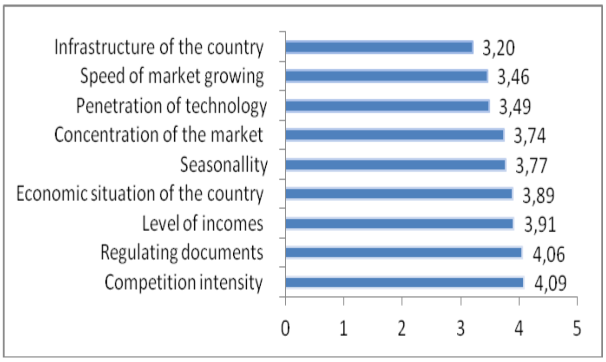

Figure 2. The evaluation of external environment factors

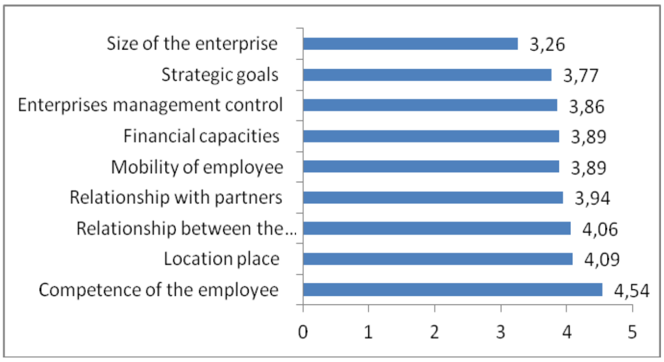

Figure 3. The evaluation of inner environment factors

The influence evaluation upon the respondents is presented in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

The most important external factors influencing the surveyed enterprises are competition intensity and the documents regulating the health care system. The evaluation of these criteria respectively is 4,09 and 4,06 score from 5 score available. The activity of the wellness services enterprises is regulated by such health care system's documents, as the *Law of Health System*, *Law for Health enterprises*, etc. This was also emphasized by the respondents. The most important factor influencing enterprise activity among the inner environment factors is employee competence (4,54 score from 5 available). Other factors influencing the activity of the enterprises are services enterprises' location place (4,09 score), the relationship between the employer and the employee (4,06 score).

Correlation analysis trying to identify the intensity of the relation among separate environment indicators was done. Proceeding the correlation analysis of the external environment factors, some conclusions could be made. Concentration of the market depends a lot on the competitiveness intensity (the value of the correlation coefficient is in the interval 0,6 – 0,8; r = 0,646). The average correlation is between the level of income and competition intensity (r = 0,417), the speed of market growing (r = 0,510), the economic situation of the country (r = 0,515), and the infrastructure of the country (r = 0,460), as well as the speed of the market growing with the infrastructure of the country (r = 0,412). The correlation analysis of the external environment factors has shown that the higher concentration of the market and the level of people incomes, the more intense competition of wellness services enterprises as well as their engaged position on the market. A strong branch in the wellness services industry helps develop country infrastructure and improve economic situation in the country more quickly.

Having completed correlation analysis of the inner environmental factors, some deductions could be suggested. Strategic goals depend highly on the enterprises management control (r = 0,628), averagely depend on the enterprise services location place (r = 0,409), and on enterprises financial capacities (r = 0,409). The average dependence could be noted for such factors as: the competence of employees and the relation among the employer and the employee (r = 0,415), the mobility of employee and the competence of the employee (r = 0,431), the competence of the employee and the size of the enterprise (r = 0,427), enterprises financial capacities and the size of the enterprise (r = 0,455), the enterprise services location place and the size of the enterprise (r = 0,428). The correlation analysis of the inner environmental factors has shown that the larger the enterprise, the more significant its financial capacity becomes and the more attention is paid to the place of enterprise's services location. Meanwhile, the more competence employees have, the more mobile they are. That is why it is rather important to guarantee such conditions for them which could satisfy their need for appropriate environment and loyalty to the enterprise. Searching to manage organizational resources of the enterprise correctly, the wellness services should choose appropriate tactics and to raise specific strategic goals which could help retain the positions on the market.

Market–oriented position dimensions expression, dominating in the enterprises. Proceeding the analysis of the criteria disclosing the **customer–oriented** position, one of the tasks was disclosing the ways for attracting and keeping the customers, used by wellness services enterprises, as well as revealing which of these means could be used in order to improve the process of the services supply and product creation (Table 1).

The findings of the survey have shown that the surveyed enterprises supply quality merchandise and services (the total average value was 4,63 score from 5 available). The respondents have pointed out that enterprises try to reach long-run partnership with clients (the total average value of the criteria 4,49), the price for the services is settled into the relation to quality (the total average value 4,43 score), the company listens to the wishes of consumers (the total average value 4,31), discounts, sales, and privileges are applied (the total average value 4,20), products and services are differentiated (the total average value 3,83), after sale guarantee is provided (the total average value 3,80), and customers satisfaction surveys related to services enterprises products and services are processed (the total average value 3,57).

Table 1

Evaluation of customer–oriented position criteria

Criteria	Average (⇩)	Standard deviation	Standard error of mean	Total average
The supply of qualitative products and services	4,63	0,81	0,27	4,009± 0,962
The maintenance of long-run relationship with the clients	4,49	0,66	0,22	
The maintenance of the quality and product relation	4,43	0,85	0,38	
The satisfaction of customers' needs	4,31	0,68	0,39	
The application of discounts, sales, and privileges	4,20	1,13	0,22	
The differentiation of products and services	3,83	1,04	0,36	
The provision of a post-sell services guarantee	3,80	1,18	0,28	
The surveys of customer satisfaction with the services and products supplied by the enterprise	3,57	1,04	0,38	
The search for new markets and segments	3,49	1,09	0,34	
The creation of unique and innovative products	3,34	1,14	0,35	

Table 2

Evaluation of competitors–oriented position criteria

Criteria	Average (⇩)	Standard deviation	Standard error of mean	Total average
The improvement of production quality	4,40	0,65	0,22	3,506± 0,972
The shaping of a positive enterprise image	4,23	1,00	0,33	
The differentiation of the supplied services	3,71	0,86	0,28	
The search of leadership in their own branch	3,69	1,02	0,34	
The observation and analysis of competitors' actions	3,60	0,91	0,30	
The competition with available organizational resources	3,54	1,01	0,33	
The competition with the available relationship with the interested parties	3,49	1,09	0,36	
The competition in the implementation of technologies and innovations in the enterprise	3,23	0,97	0,32	
The competition with low costs	2,91	1,17	0,39	
The imitation of competitors' actions	2,26	1,04	0,34	

The respondents vaguely agree that they are looking for not filled or overstocked markets (the total average value 3,49); that unique and innovative products are created. 88,2 percent of the respondents have pointed out that their customers are able to co–operate supplying suggestions for improvements, to declare their opinion in such ways as: putting their responses in special boxes, doing surveys, supplying recommendations, spreading out information WOM, etc. 11,8 percent of the respondents have named the possibility to improve the programmes of the supplied services. 5,9 percent of the respondents have mentioned that the customers are able to communicate directly to services suppliers, such as trainers, to participate in the events and seminars organized by the enterprise. 5,9 percent of respondents have pointed out other ways of customers participating in the supply of the services process and creation of the product process, too. Such ways have been mentioned as periodic preventive visits to the doctor, check–ups of the health state as well as contribution to the process by goodwill, friendliness in the entire process of the service or product creation.

Analysing the criteria to disclose **competitors orientation**, it was identified that enterprises compete mostly improving the quality of their production (the total average value 4,40) and shaping a good image (the total average value 4,23) (see Table 2).

Large attention is paid to differentiation of the supplied services and products (the total average value 3,71), to seeking leadership in their branch (the total average value 3,69), to careful observation and analysis of competitors' actions (the total average value 3,60), to competition on the basics of the available organizational resources (the total average value 3,54). The respondents have partially agreed that their enterprises compete with the available relationships with the interested parties (the total average value 3,49), with the implementation of new technologies and other innovations (the total average value 3,23) and with low costs (the total average value 2,91).

Having performed the analysis of **inter-coordination-oriented position** criteria, the investigation proceeds stating that managers of health and wellness organizations understand the importance of employee involvement and innovations (Table 3) rather well.

Table 3

Evaluation of inter-coordination–oriented position criteria

Criteria	Average (⇩)	Standard deviation	Standard error of mean	Total average
The stimulation of employee team work	4,49	0,61	0,20	4,032± 0,871
The organization of common enterprise employee events	4,40	0,95	0,31	
The creation of a creative working environment	4,17	0,82	0,27	
The regular meeting organization	4,03	0,75	0,25	
The communication of enterprise values	4,00	0,94	0,31	
The communication of information in the enterprise	4,00	0,77	0,25	
The providing of the communication and connection equipment and means for the enterprise employees	3,97	1,04	0,35	
The engagement of the employees into the decision making process	3,89	0,80	0,26	
The engagement of the employees into the realization of enterprise strategic goals	3,74	0,82	0,27	
The grand of the premiums for the team results achievement	3,63	1,21	0,40	

The findings of the survey show that team work is stimulated in enterprises (the total average value 4,49). There are common events for enterprise's employees organized in companies (the total average value 4,40), friendly working conditions are created (the total average value 4,17), regular meetings of the employee are organized (4,03), regular sharing of the information in the enterprise is provided (the total average value 4,00), the values of the enterprise are implanted to the employee (the total average value 4,00), etc.

The survey has revealed that wellness services enterprises use all possible ways and means of functional sphere employees' cooperation. 80,0 percent of the respondents have pointed out that they are able to participate in the organized seminars and other events, 74,3 percent – to get recognition for the achieved working results, 71,4 percent – to get material premiums together with the salary, and 62,9 percent – to attend additional trainings, seminars. A smaller part of the respondents have pointed out the possibility to improve the qualification or even to change it (40 percent of the all respondents), to be promoted in the professional sphere (34,3 percent), to go for internship and on business trips (31,4 percent), to endeavour for a salary rise (28,6 percent). 11,4 percent of the respondents have mentioned other opportunities in the enterprise besides the noted above.

Such opportunities were mentioned as the opportunity to get free procedures, privileges, gift coupons for the services, supplied by the enterprise, or to get any discounts for their production. In general, the findings of the survey show that there is a significant expression in the answers which declare the possibilities to participate in organized seminars, to get recognition for well-done work results, to get material premiums with the salary or even to be promoted in the occupation position, to go for an internship, on business trips, and to achieve a rising salary in relation to the achieved results and the supplied privileges of the enterprise.

The dimensions of customer–orientation, competitors–orientation, and inter–functional coordination are related to the adoption of technologies and innovations trying to strengthen the position. The empirical survey had to disclose if the researched enterprises implemented innovations. It is observed that innovations are perceived as technological novelties which improve operation of the enterprise. 34,5 percent of the respondents pointed out that their enterprises renewed the inventory at the moment of the survey. 27,6 percent of them have mentioned that the working place is modernized and computerizing system is implemented. 13,8 percent of the respondents have indicated that the quality of services and products in their enterprises are improved. Accordingly, 10,3 percent of them have pointed out the creation of the new services, products, the organizing of staff training, the improvement of the supplied services programs. 6,9 percent of the respondents have pointed out that websites of the enterprises are created and maintained in order to inform the customer. The findings of the survey show that wellness services enterprises do not practise opportunities provided in e–business: only 3,4 percent of the inquired respondents have mentioned that e–business is created in their enterprise.

The results of the research show that competitors–orientation depends averagely on customer–orientation (the value of the coefficient is in the interval from 0,4 to 0,6, and r = 0,576). The intensification of competitors–orientation leads to the intensification of customer–orientation, and vice versa (Figure 4).

There is a weak dependence among the competitors–orientation and the inter–functional coordination (the coefficient value is from 0,1 to 0,4, and r = 0,366). Customer–orientation averagely depends on the competitors–orientation (r = 0,576) and strongly depends on the inter–functional co-ordination (r = 0,652). It could be pointed out that the relation in the wellness services enterprises among the dimensions of customer–orientation and inter-functional co-ordination is strong enough.

Getting deeper into separate dimensions indicators and their mutual interdependence, a few trends could be underlined. They are supported by strong correlation relations among the variables. Such results could be developed, investigating mutual dependence among competitors–orientation and customer–orientation. The enterprises should differentiate their supplied services and products trying to compete, to attract consumers and keep them, because the relation of the mutual relation is strong enough (r = 0,730).

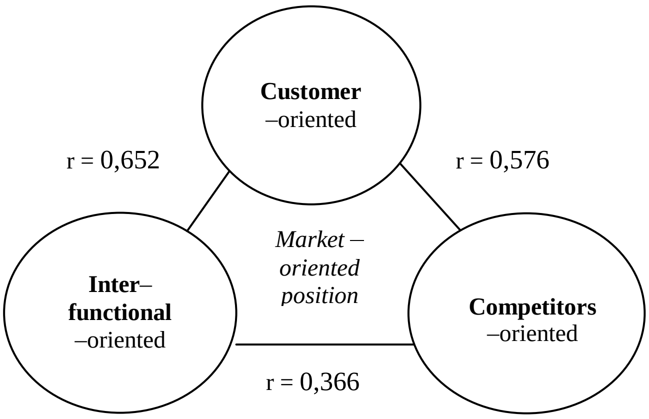

Figure 4. Correlation between dimensions of market – oriented position (p<0,01)

The enterprises should also differentiate their supplied services and look for not saturated, not served markets (r = 0,613). The enterprises which try to strengthen competitor–orientation are able to combine the variables of these dimensions mutual dependence. A strong relation can be observed among the careful observance of competitors' actions, the analysis of these actions specifics, and supplied services differentiation in their own branch (r = 0,661). Strong relation can be observed among the positive image of the enterprise and the improvement of the production quality (r = 0,651). The competition and available relations with stakeholders correlate with technology and innovation implementation in the enterprise (r = 0,689). It is evident that differentiating the supplied services and providing the products, the actions of competitors are evaluated; improving the quality of the production, a positive image of the enterprise is shaped. The enterprises which invoke the available relationship with stakeholders are able to purchase the most modern technologies and implement them in enterprise's processes. Trying to strengthen the dimension of inter–functional coordination, enterprises can combine the variables of these dimensions mutual dependence which correlate with each other strongly enough. Employees are involved in the decision process, organizing regular meetings of the employees (r = 0,600). In conveying the enterprise values for the employees, cooperation and team work are stimulated (r = 0,620), employee empowerment for achieving enterprise goals is facilitated (r = 0,688). The engagement of employees into the realization of enterprise's strategic goals will stimulate their (employees') participation in the decision making process (r = 0,765). The findings of the survey and main results allow the authors to presuppose discussions and suggestions for strengthening the position of the wellness services enterprises.

Concluding remarks

The findings of the survey have shown that external and internal factors influence the market–oriented position of the company. The external environmental factors partially influence or influence the activity of the wellness services enterprises (the evaluation of the indicators of the survey was spread between score 3,2 and 4,09). The factors of the inner environment factors partially influence, influence, and fully influence the activity of the enterprises (the evaluation of the indicators from 3,26 and 4,54 scales). The average of the evaluation of all indicators evaluating the inner environment influence was score 3,92 from 5 available, and external – score 3,69 from 5 possible. That confirms that the inner environment influences the decisions of the enterprises more than the external one. Enterprises try to react to the changes of the environment and achieve competitive advantage quickly enough. Enterprise's competitive advantage is a function of market attractiveness and a competitive position already gained. The companies which are market–oriented achieve sustainable competitive advantage combining competitors–oriented, customer–oriented, and inter–functional–oriented positions.

On the grounds of the empirical research results, the authors can state that the customer–oriented position is strongly expressed by such criteria as satisfaction of customers' needs and relations maintenance with them, the maintenance of the quality and product relation, supply of qualitative products and services. The enterprises of wellness services industry mostly compete by improving the quality of their production and by shaping a good image. They try to apply technological innovations. The majority of the respondents of the wellness services enterprises search for the development and implementation of technologic novelties and for adopting innovative solutions; they also try to expand technological capacities. However, the inter–coordination oriented position is expressed more by the employee involvement.

The findings of the research show that inter–functional co-ordination in the wellness services enterprises as well as customer–orientation manifest themselves relatively more intensively than the orientation to the competitor. Referring to the empirical research, it is possible to provide advice to the businesses, to foresee the following possibilities for the strengthening of the market–oriented position of the researched companies in the wellness services market: 1) try not only to use new technologies, but also to create unique and innovative products; 2) organize the surveys of customer satisfaction systematically; 3) engage employees into the decision making process and realization of the enterprise strategic goals; and 4) try to achieve the synergy among three dimensions seeking to acquire competitive advantage quickly.

Further research should cover a larger amount of the companies which perform their activities in the wellness services sector in Lithuania or (and) neighbouring countries. Also, comparative studies in wellness services should be organized.

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Į rinką orientuotos pozicijos raiška sveikatingumo paslaugų įmonėse

Santrauka

Sveikatingumo paslaugų industrija yra viena svarbiausių paslaugų industrijų, tiesiogiai susijusių su individų gyvenimo kokybe. Pastaraisiais metais šis sektorius įtakojamas tiek vidinių (Jayawardena et al., 2013; Liyanage, Jayawardena, 2013) (privačių sveikatos priežiūros centrų steigimas, medicininių išlaidų ar gyvybės draudimas, naujų sveikatingumo centrų kūrimas ir pan.), tiek išorinių pokyčių (reformų, ekonominių pokyčių, demografinių vartotojų charakteristikų, technologinio progreso ir pan.). Skirtingi subjektai veikia šioje rinkoje: privačios klinikos, vieši ir privatūs sveikatinimo ir sveikatingumo centrai ir klubai, sveikatos draudimo įstaigos ir kitos institucijos. Kiekvienas iš rinkos dalyvių turi skirtingas vizijas apie veiklos plėtrą, perspektyvas ir reikalingų išteklių poreikį. Augantys sveikatingumo paslaugų vartotojų poreikiai (Voigt et al., 2011), didėjanti konkurencija verčia šios industrijos dalyvius permąstyti būdus, kaip veikti rinkoje efektyviai. Todėl svarbu proaktyviai reaguoti į konkurencinės aplinkos pokyčius, reaguoti į vartotojų poreikius, adaptuoti naujas technologijas ir kurti inovatyvias platformas. Moksliniuose tyrimuose (Monteson, Singer, 2004; McNeil, Ragins, 2005) akcentuojamas naujų novatoriškų produktų poreikis, technologinių sprendimų naudojimas, kuriant duomenų bazių platformas, integruojant paslaugų teikimo sistemos sprendimus su novatoriškais rinkodaros produktais, vartotojų demografinių charakteristikų, jų profilio pokyčiai, sąlygojantys vartotojų elgsenos pokyčius. Vartotojų elgsenos pokyčiai, labiau individualizuotų paslaugų poreikis suponuoja vartotojo bendrakūros svarbą teikiant sveikatingumo ir sveikatinimo paslaugas (Carida et al., 2012; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012). Sveikatos ir sveikatinimo paslaugas teikiančios įmonės turi patenkinti vis didėjantį vartotojų poreikį individualizuotoms paslaugoms, tad turi siūlyti į rinką orientuotas paslaugas.

Moksliniuose tyrimuose orientacija į rinką apima ne tik vartotojų poreikių monitoringą, lūkesčių numatymą bei jų tenkinimą, bet ir institucijų reguliavimo mechanizmų, regioninio bendradarbiavimo, konkurentų, technologijų bei konkurentų poveikius, turimų žinių apie rinką sklaidą bei įsisavinimą įmonės padaliniuose formalių ir neformalių kanalų dėka (Wood et al., 2000, Kaynak, Kara, 2004). Organizacijų prioritetu tampa pozicija, nukreipta į visus rinkos dalyvius, todėl siekiama patenkinti rinkos lūkesčius, užsitikrinant tam tikrą poziciją joje (Vilkaitė, Daukševičiūtė, 2011). Tokios pozicijos pasirinkimas yra įgyvendinimas per orientaciją į rinką, kurią apima orientacijos į vartotoją, orientacijos į konkurentą bei tarpfunkcinės koordinacijos dimensijos. Šias dimensijas analizavo Narver, Slater (1990), Chang, Chen (1998), Leisen et al. (2002). Siekiant įgyti ir išlaikyti stiprias pozicijas, reikia derinti visas šias dimensijas. Tačiau į rinką orientuota pozicija nebuvo analizuojama sveikatingumo paslaugų kontekste.

Atlikus mokslinių tyrimų analizę, apimančią sveikatingumo paslaugas, galima teigti, jog daugumos tyrėjų paslaugų verslo tyrimų objektu pasirenkamos pačios sveikatingumo paslaugos specifika (Chen et al., 2013), itin akcentuojant jų paslaugų kokybės dimensijas, produktyvumo aspektus. Analizuojami sveikatingumo paslaugų vartotojų lūkesčiai, paslaugų teikėjų gebėjimo tenkinti šiuos lūkesčius įtakos vartotojų lojalumui ir kiti aspektai (Chen et al., 2013; Satya et al., 2013). Dažnai be relaksacijai priskiriamų paslaugų, kurios tapatinamos su sveikatingumo, vartotojų vertinamos ir medicininės paslaugos, kurios taip pat gali įeiti į sveikatingumo paslaugų paketą. Šių paslaugų išskyrimas grindžiamas jų būtinybe pacientams, tačiau reikėtų akcentuoti, jog būtinosios sveikatos priežiūros paslaugos, finansuojamos biudžetinių institucijų, yra pakankamai griežtai reglamentuotos. Todėl komercinių sveikatinimo paslaugų pasiūla vartotojui užpildė nišą rinkoje ir kartu su sveikatingumo paslaugomis gali būti įvardintos kaip santykinai naujos Lietuvos vartotojui. Lietuvoje atliktų sveikatingumo tyrimai apima tokius tyrimus: sveikatingumo SPA paslaugų vystymo prielaidas (Langvinienė, Sekliuckienė, 2009, 2012), SPA paslaugų vartotojų lūkesčių analizę ir jų elgsenos pokyčius, teikimo inovacijų poveikio Lietuvos sveikatos ir sveikatingumo paslaugų įmonių konkurenciniam pranašumui tyrimus. Kiti Lietuvoje atlikti sveikatingumo verslo paslaugų tyrimai gana fragmentiški. Stasys ir Pucinkienė (2009) tyrė e–paslaugas, Bagdonienė ir Hopenienė (2010) – sveikatingumo klasterio Lietuvoje kūrimosi prielaidas.

Atlikta mokslinių tyrimų analizė leidžia teigti, kad sveikatingumo paslaugų tyrimai fragmentiški, nėra analizuojami per strateginę prizmę, išskiriant šių paslaugų į rinką orientuotos pozicijos dimensijas. Todėl į rinką orientuotų sveikatingumo paslaugų raiškos tematika aktuali tiek dėl tyrimo objekto, tiek dėl siekio atskleisti į rinką orientuotų paslaugų dimensijų raišką pozicionuojant šias paslaugas rinkoje. Tyrimo problema gali būti išreikšta klausimu: kokia yra į rinką orientuotos pozicijos raiška sveikatingumo paslaugų sektoriuje Lietuvoje?

Tyrimo tikslas – atskleisti į rinką orientuotos pozicijos raišką, analizuojant tris dimensijas: 1) orientaciją į vartotoją; 2) orientaciją į konkurentus; ir 3) tarpfunkcinę orientaciją sveikatingumo paslaugų įmonėse. Pažymėtinas tyrimo apribojimas: tirtos ne visos Lietuvos, o tik Kauno apskrityje veikiančios įmonės, todėl tyrimo rezultatų negalima generalizuoti visai tiriamajai aibei.

Straipsnio autorės teoriškai pagrindžia į rinką orientuotų įmonių pozicijos išlaikymo svarbą, pateikia orientacijos į rinką dekompoziciją. Egzistuoja požiūrių įvairovė, tačiau dažniausiai išskiriamos tokios pagrindinės orientacijos į rinką dimensijos: orientacija į vartotoją, orientacija į konkurentą bei tarpfunkcinė koordinacija. Narver ir Slater (1990) akcentuoja ilgalaikiškumą ir pelningumą, kaip svarbiausius orientacijos į rinką pozicijos rezultatus. Ilgalaikių investicijų perspektyva atliepia orientaciją į rinką, ja grindžiama ilgalaikių ryšių su vartotojais svarba. Pelnas yra suvokiamas kaip orientacijos į rinką komponentas, kai pelningumas traktuojamas kaip orientacijos į rinką pasekmė bei vienas iš organizacijos tikslų. Straipsnyje pateikiamas konceptualus orientacijos į rinką modelis, kuris yra tikrinamas atliekant empirinį tyrimą sveikatingumo paslaugų rinkoje.

Atliktas empirinis tyrimas, atskleidė, kokie aplinkos poveikiai veikia sveikatingumo paslaugų įmones bei kokia yra orientacijos į rinką dimensijų raiška. Žvalgomajame tyrime dalyvavo 35 įmonių vadovai, kurių įmonės įsikūrusios Kauno apskrityje; skaičiuoti taškiniai įverčiai, standartinis nuokrypis nuo vidurkio, koreliaciniai ryšiai.

Empirinio tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad tiek išorinės, tiek vidinės aplinkos veiksniai iš dalies įtakoja ar įtakoja įmonių veiklą. Tiriant orientacijos į rinką dimensijų raišką sveikatingumo sektoriuose nustatyta, kad įmonėse stipriai pasireiškia tarpfunkcinės koordinacijos ir orientacijos į vartotoją dimensijos. Visų funkcinių sričių darbuotojų įtraukimas į veiklą ir suteikiamos galimybės parodo tarpfunkcinės koordinacijos raišką įmonėse ir įgalina orientacijos į vartotoją stiprinimą, kas leidžia strategiją nukreipti į vartotojų poreikių tenkinimą, teikiamų paslaugų ir siūlomų produktų kokybės gerinimą. Sveikatingumo įmonės aktyviai diegia inovacijas, formuoja teigiamą įmonės įvaizdį, tam gerina produkcijos kokybę, kad išliktų konkurencingos ir sustiprintų savo poziciją rinkoje. Reikėtų pažymėti, kad kiekviena iš orientacijos į rinką dimensijų stiprina įmonės poziciją rinkoje. Sveikatingumo paslaugų įmonės turi siekti visų dimensijų raiškos sinergijos tam, kad būtų konkurencingos ir pasiektų gerų veiklos rezultatų.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: į rinką orientuotas pozicionavimas, į vartotoją orientuotas pozicionavimas, tarpfunkcinis pozicionavimas, sveikatingumo paslaugos.

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